

Strengthening Literacy Through Family Engagement

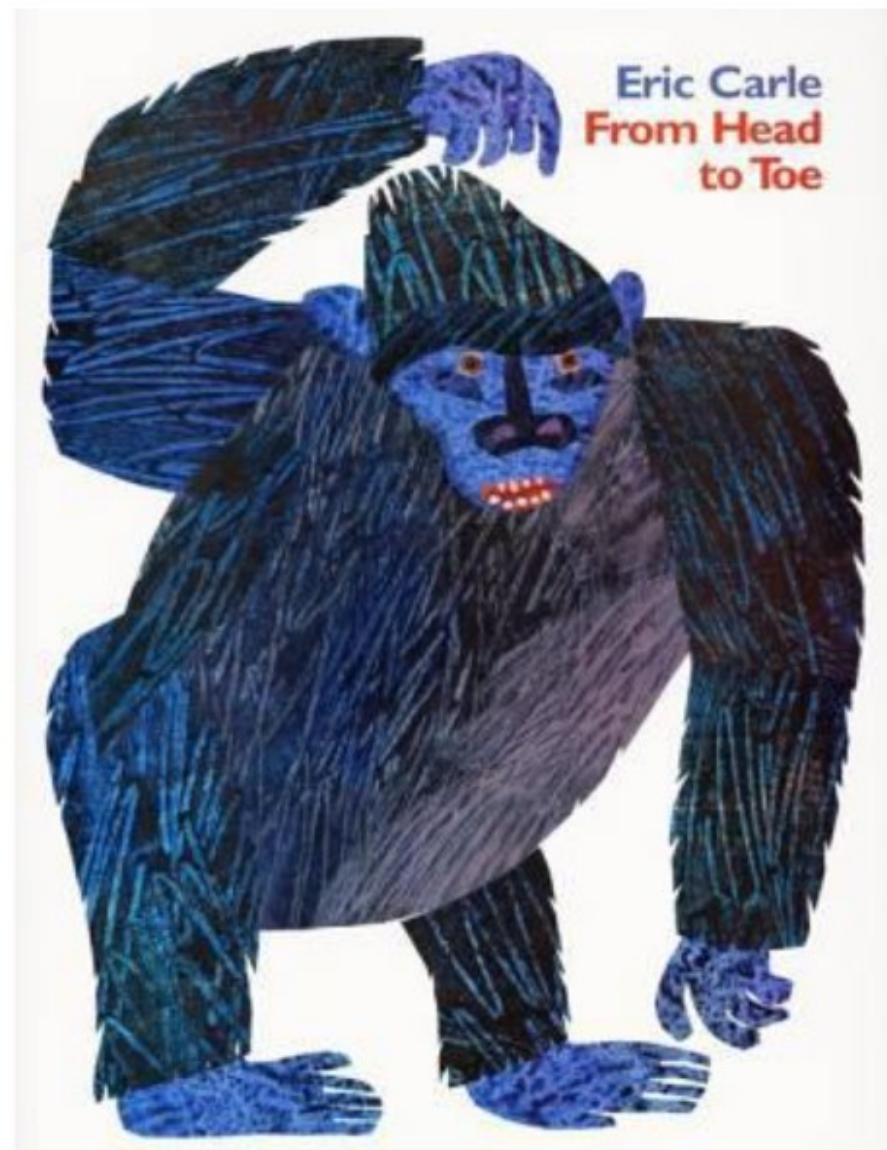


National Indian Head Start Directors Association Conference
June 15 - 18, 2026
Costa Mesa, CA



Head Start Regional TTA Network

Let's Move!



Head Start Regional TTA Network

Our Time Together

- Discuss the role of adult-child interactions in boosting early literacy skills.
- Review strategies that support emergent language and literacy skills for children birth to 5.
- Explore partnering with families to support early literacy.





Impact of Adult-Child *Interactions*



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These materials were developed for OHS/Region XI Training and Technical Assistance Network under Contract No 140D0425C0027 by ICF.

Why Family Engagement Matters



- Families are children's first and most important teachers
- Children learn language through relationships
- Families help children feel confident and ready to learn

Families know their child best – their strengths, needs, and what brings them joy!



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Families as Partners

- Partnering with families strengthen outcomes
- Families time, commitment, and love make a big difference
- Together, we create a strong circle of support around each child
- Learning begins at home and continues in the classroom



Children are **40% more likely** to enjoy reading when they see adults—especially parents and caregivers—enjoy reading themselves.



Adults who enjoy reading tend to use expressive voices, gestures, and conversation.

This rich interaction exposes children to more vocabulary, sentence structures, and storytelling patterns.



When adults are genuinely interested, they invite questions, predictions, and dialogue—critical for oral language growth and comprehension.



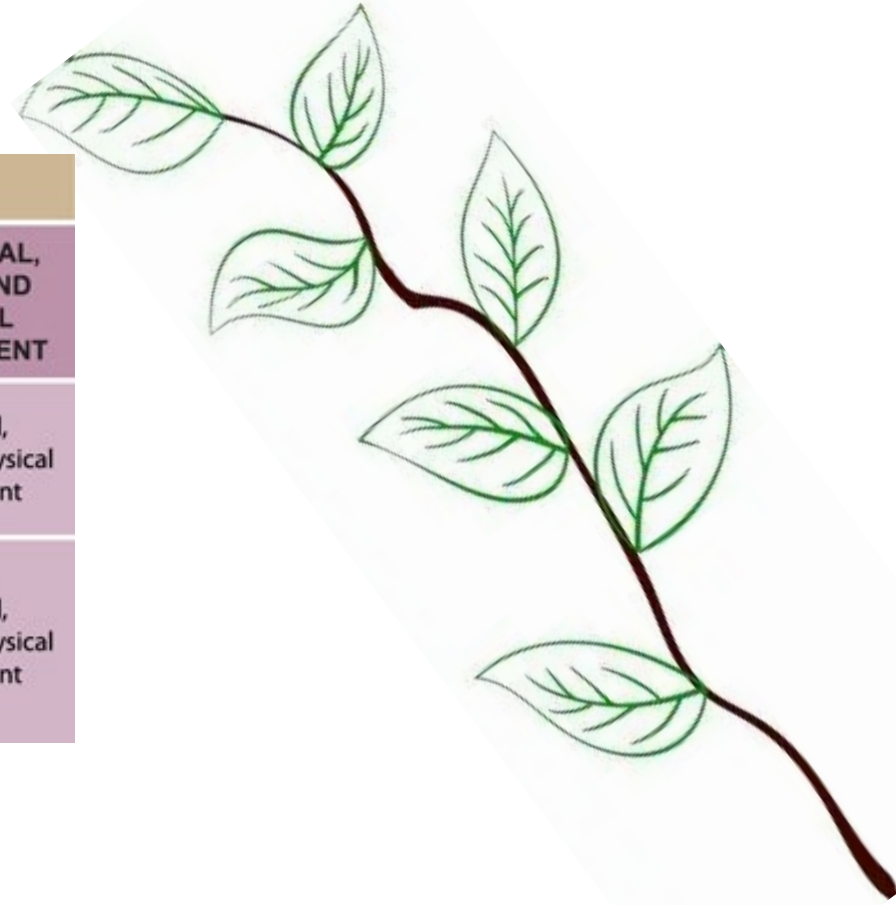
Why Are Your Interactions With Children so Powerful?



Adult-child interactions matter because research shows they build language, thinking, and social skills—key foundations for reading and writing success.

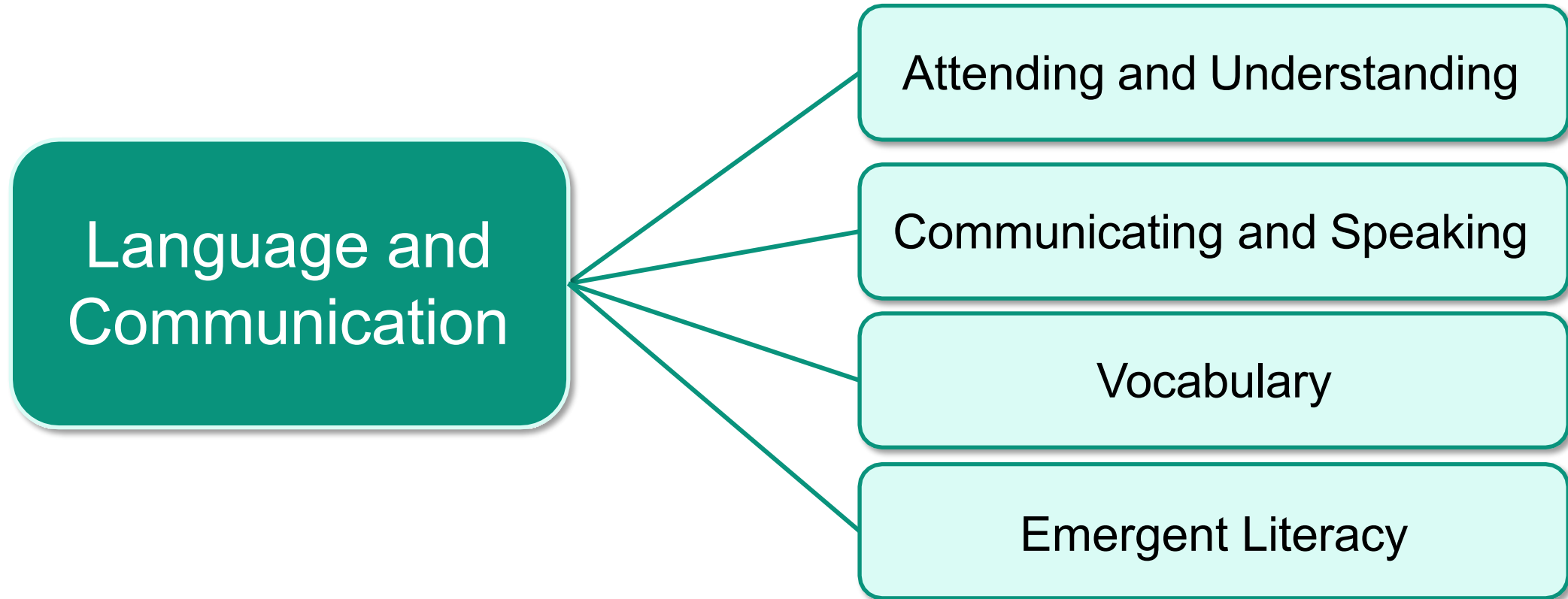
Early Learning Outcomes Framework

	CENTRAL DOMAINS				
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	



Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Infant and Toddler



Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Preschool

Language and
Communication

Attending & Understanding
Communicating & Speaking
Vocabulary

Literacy

Phonological Awareness
Print & Alphabet Knowledge
Comprehension & Text Structure



Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Family engagement is how ELOF comes to life in children's everyday experiences



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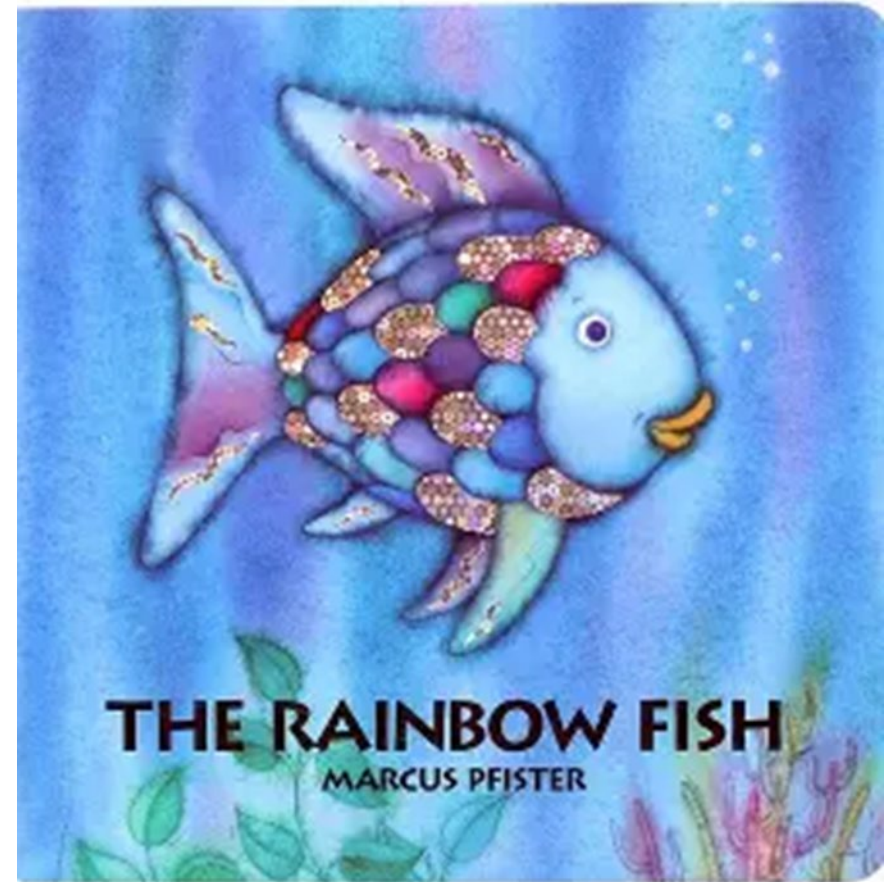
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ELOF Exploration

What You Need:

- Fish template
- Crayons
- Round colorful and shiny stickers





Strategies



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Language-rich Environments



- Build relationships
- Learn new words
- Practice conversations
- Develop cognitive skills
- Communicate clearly and accurately

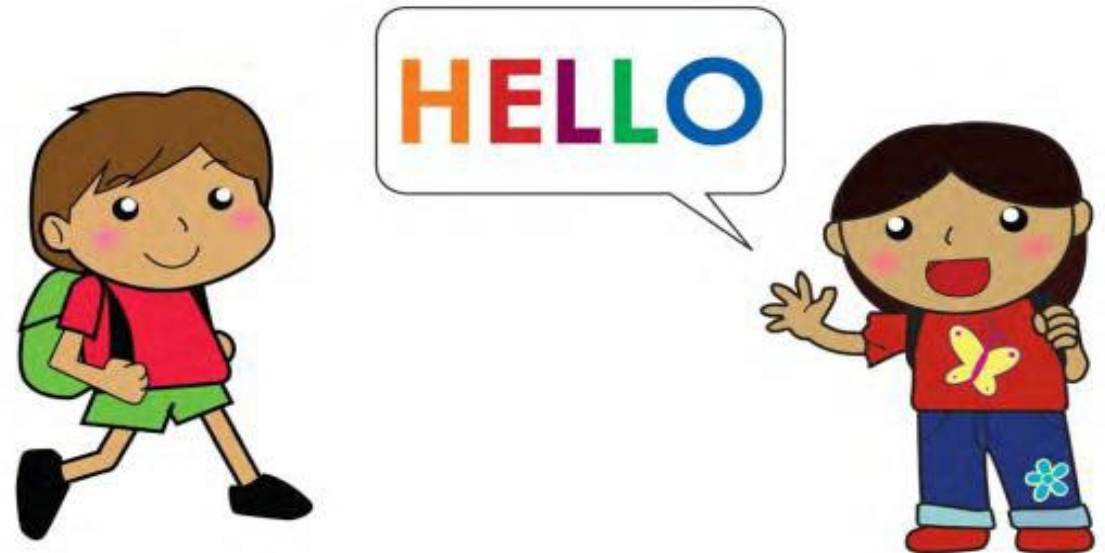


Conversations

- Back-and-Forth Exchanges Serve and Return
- Talk and Listen Give and Receive

Say “HELLO”

- H**ave Conversations
- E**xtend into **THICK**
- L**isten and Ask Questions
- L**isten and **E**xpand
- O**ffer New Words



Print-rich Environments

Includes labels, signs, books and written information

Uses print in real and interesting ways



Strategies That Support Emergent Language & Literacy

The Book



CONNECT



ADVANCED VOCABULARY



SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT



EXTEND BEYOND
THE BOOK



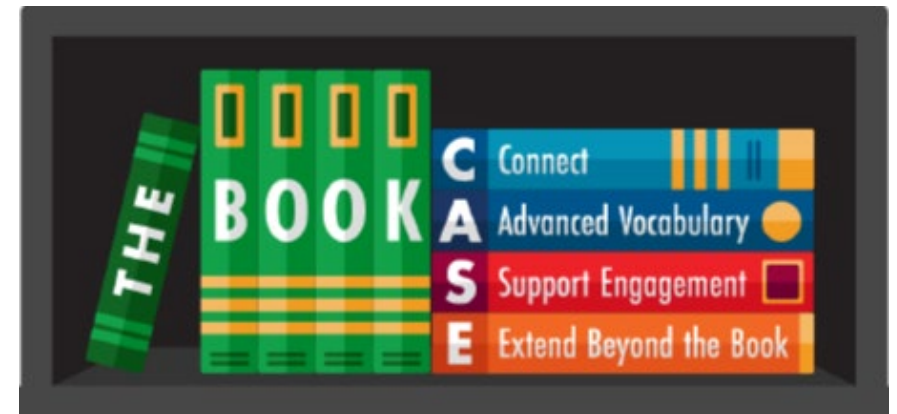
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Strategies That Support Emergent Language & Literacy

The **BookCASE** Approach

- **Connect the ELOF**
 - Select books that link to specific ELOF domains or subdomains.
- **Advance the Vocabulary**
 - Read aloud and talk about new words.
- **Support Engagement**
 - Reading should feel positive and interactive.
- **Extend Beyond the Book**
 - Bring the story into play and writing.



See the BookCASE

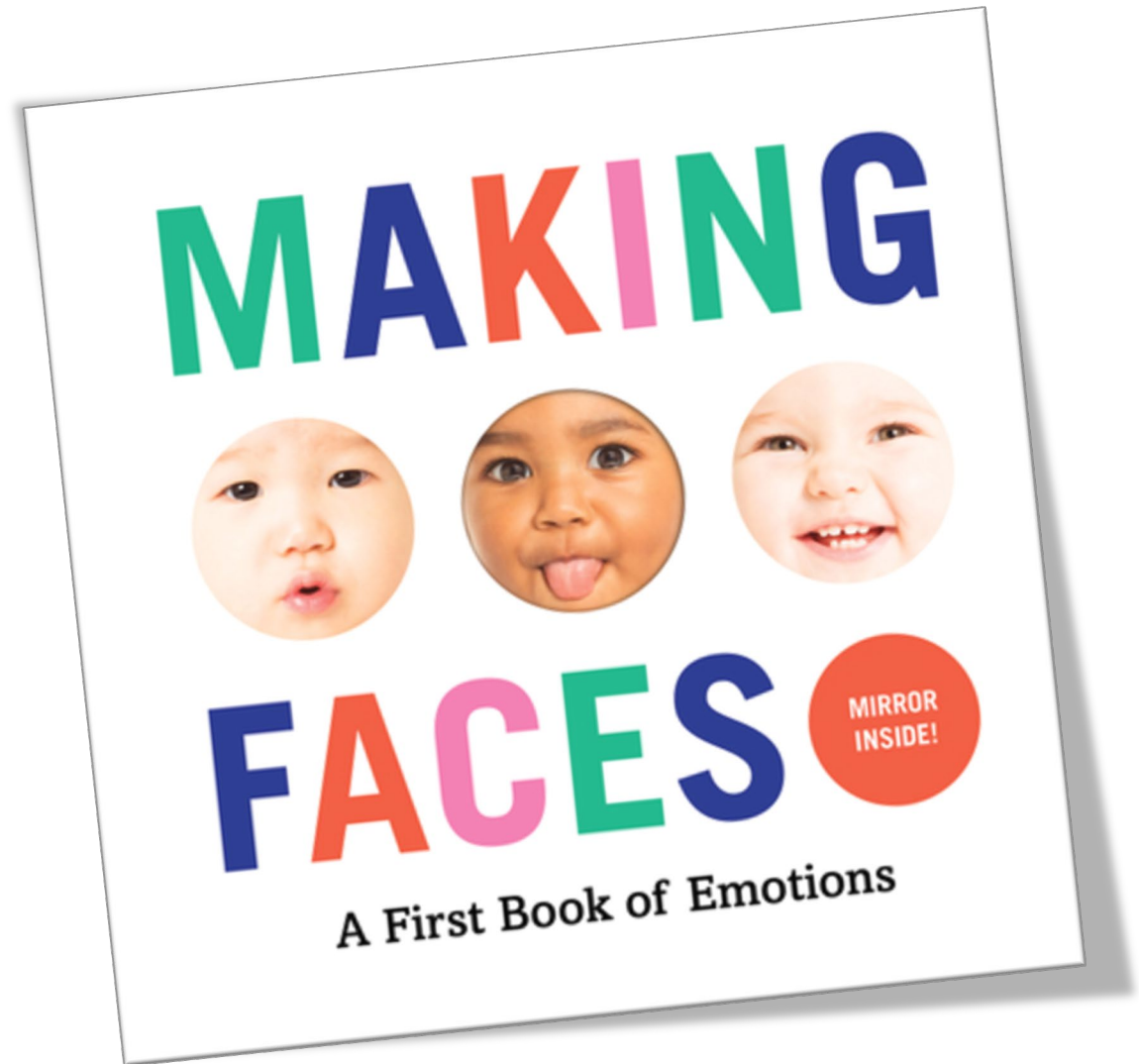
NCECDTL

NATIONAL CENTER ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

Making Faces

by Abrams Appleseed

This book features five emotional expressions: happy, sad, angry, surprised, and silly. It pairs each expression with an image of a baby's face. It also invites children to interact with the book – supporting emotional literacy.



Let's review the handout together



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Know the BookCASE



Teacher Time Explore the BookCASE

The BookCASE is a segment in the Teacher Time series that helps educators make the most of books. Each episode uses the BookCASE approach to Connect, Advance Children's Vocabulary, Support Engagement, and Extend Beyond the Book. Books engage children and support their learning across all the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) domains. Matching books with familiar themes and activities creates meaningful experiences. Choosing topics that interest children shows we value their ideas.

Use this worksheet to make a CASE for the books you share with children.

The children in my learning environment will enjoy this book:

Make the CASE

Connect:

ELOF Connection:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

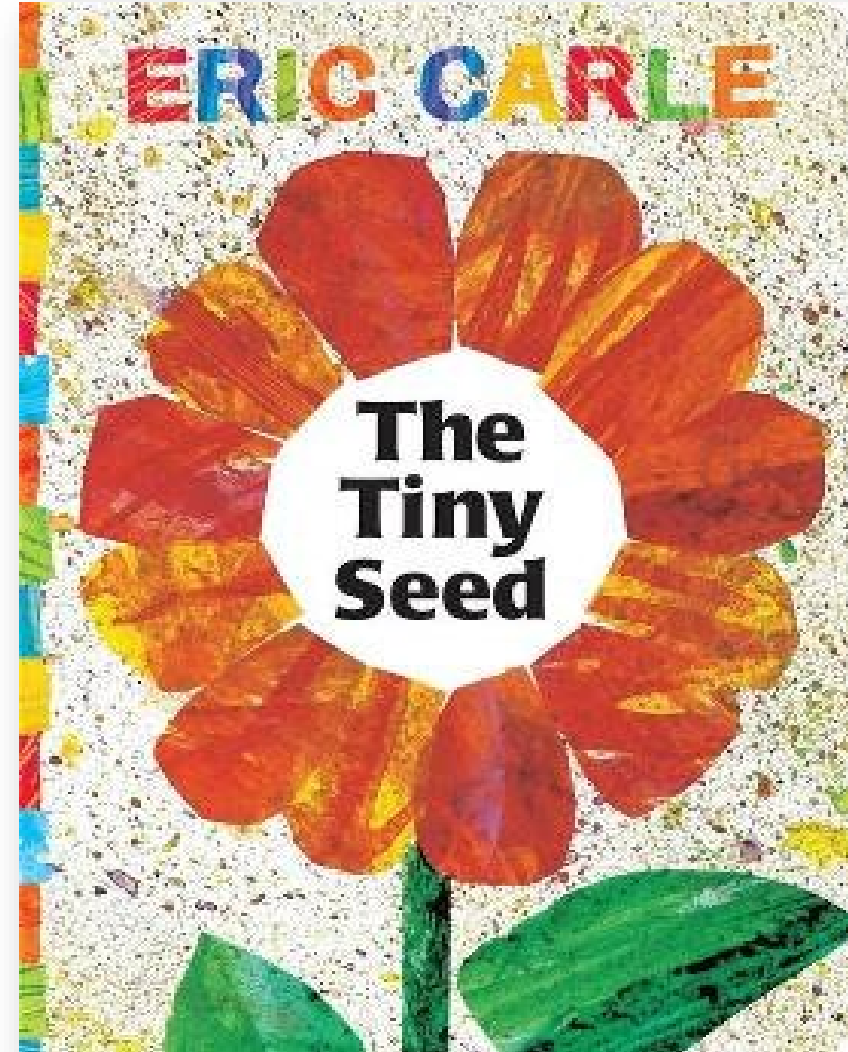


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Explore the BookCASE

What You Need:

- Book
- ELOF domain/subdomain- can be more than one
- Materials for extending the story



Share your Experience Using the BookCASE

Share your BookCase exploration



Teacher Time Explore the BookCASE

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Make the CASE

Connect:

ELOF Connection:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:



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Exploring Early Literacy Family Event Planning



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Connecting Home and Head Start

You are your child's first teacher.

Simple daily moments help your child learn and grow.

What Your Child Is Learning
Understanding Words
Using Words
Songs & Rhymes
Books & Pictures
Understanding Stories
Curiosity
Relationships
Imagination
Early Writing

What This Looks Like
Listening and understanding
Talking and communicating
Enjoying sounds and patterns
Looking at books
Listening to stories
Exploring and learning
Feeling safe and connected
Pretend play
Drawing and scribbling

Easy Things You Can Do at Home
Talk about what you are doing during daily routines
Have back-and-forth conversations
Sing songs and say rhymes together
Read together and talk about pictures
Ask simple questions about the story
Follow your child's interests
Spend time talking and cuddling
Encourage storytelling and play
Offer crayons and paper



BookCASE Book List



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INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Read. Talk. Play. Thrive.
A Whole-Child Literacy Institute

BookCASE Book List

*Available in Spanish or is bilingual!

ELOF Domain: Approaches to Learning

ELOF Subdomain	Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation
Theme: Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stuck</i> by Oliver Jeffers • <i>Where's Spot?</i> by Eric Hill • <i>Ellie: La Elefantita Creativa</i> by Mike Wu* • <i>Baby Says</i> by John Steptoe
ELOF Subdomain	Initiative and Curiosity
Theme: Asking Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who Jumps More?</i> by Grace Lin* • <i>See, Touch, Feel: A First sensory book to share with your baby</i> by Priddy Books • <i>Hands On!</i> by Anne Wynter • <i>We All Play</i> by Julie Flett • <i>Ride, Roll, Run – Time for Fun</i> by Valerie Bolling • <i>Who Has Wiggle-Waggle Toes?</i> by Vicky Shiefman
ELOF Subdomain	Creativity
Theme: Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hey, Baby!: A Baby's Day in Doodles</i> by Andrea Pippins • <i>We All Play</i> by Julie Flett • <i>Daddy Calls Me Man</i> by Angela Johnson • <i>The Life or/La Vida de Jean-Michael Basquiat</i> by Patty Rodriguez and Arrian Stein* • <i>What if...?</i> by Samantha Berger

ELOF Domain: Social and Emotional

ELOF Subdomain	Relationships with Adults
Theme: Celebration of the Child and Adult Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whose Knees are These?</i> by Jabari Asim • <i>Hush! A Thai Lullaby</i> by Minfong Ho • <i>Hello, Friend/Hola, Amigo</i> by Andrés Salguero* • <i>The Color Monster</i> by Anna Lienas* • <i>Hands Can</i> by Cheryl Willis Hudson
ELOF Subdomain	Sense of Identity and Belonging
Theme: Babies and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Say Hello!</i> by Rachel Isadora • <i>We are Family</i> by Patricia Hegarty • <i>My Face Book</i> by Star Bright Books* • <i>The Five Senses: Sight!</i> by Ruth Spiro and Irene Chan • <i>Babies Around the World</i> by Puck and Violet Lemay



National Center on
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

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BookCASE Book List



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PRESCHOOL

Read. Talk. Play. Thrive.
A Whole-Child Literacy Institute

BookCASE Book List

Organized by Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Domains and Subdomains

*Available in Spanish or is bilingual!

ELOF Domain: Approaches to Learning

ELOF Subdomain	Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation
Theme: Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Boy with Big, Big Feelings</i> by Brittney Winn Lee <i>My Heart Fills with Happiness</i> by Monique Gray Smith* <i>My Body is a Rainbow: The Colors of My Feelings</i> by Mallika Chopra <i>Saturday</i> by Oge Mora*
ELOF Subdomain	Cognitive Self-Regulation
Theme: Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Waiting is Not Easy!</i> By Mo Willems <i>How Can I Wait When There's a Treat on my Plate?</i> by Dan Graham <i>I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids</i> by Gabi Garcia <i>Impulsive Ninja</i> by Mary Nihh
ELOF Subdomain	Initiative and Curiosity
Theme: Asking Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What Do You Do With an Idea?</i> By Kobi Yamada* <i>Another</i> by Christian Robinson <i>Door</i> by Jihyeon Lee <i>What If...</i> by Samantha Berger
Theme: Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are You Eating Candy Without Me?</i> by Drage Jenny Malesevic <i>Be a Maker</i> by Katey Howes <i>Many Shapes of Clay: A Story of Healing</i> by Kenehsa Sneed <i>After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)</i> by Dan Santat
ELOF Subdomain	Creativity
Theme: Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Where's Your Creativity?</i> by Aaron Rosen <i>Kamala and Maya's Big Idea</i> by Meena Harris <i>My Rainy Day Rocket Ship</i> by Markette Sheppard <i>Abby Invents The Foldibot</i> by Dr. Arlyne Simon <i>Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat</i> by Javaka Steptoe (Author)



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Family Emerging Language & Literacy Planning

At your table:

- What might you add from this session
- Discuss resources, next steps
- Write down your ideas to share back in large group



Connecting Families to Literacy Resources



- Public Library
- Literacy-focused community programs
- Other community resources

Family Literacy Event Next Steps



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Thank you!



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